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SOURCE Enclosure to R-33-51, Oarmat, Praha, (ID 818076).

INFORMATION ON CZECHOSLOVAK RAILROADS AND INDUSTRY

The following information on Czechoslovak railroads, industrial enterprises, and power facilities was furnished by a Belgian railroad construction engineer who until recently was employed on a consultant basis by the Czechoslovak government.

RAILROADS

Network West of Zilina and Zilina-Chop Trunk Line

West of Zilina the railroad, network is double tracked, and the enormous damage wrought by the Germans between Zilina and Prerov has been repaired. This section may be considered modernized, with a speed limit of 120 kilometers per hour.

The single-track line east of Zilina to Chop, which was constructed in 1895, was in very poor condition. Two years ago, at the Ninth Party Congress in Prague, the desire of the USSR to have this line reconstructed and double tracked was expressed. This project was accepted enthusiastically, and, to prove "love for Stalin" it was decided to begin it immediately with all the resources of the nation and to complete it by December 1949. This goal was not reached. It will not be possible to complete the work before the beginning of 1953.

This project includes tunnel construction, bridge construction, laying of second track, and straightening out the right-of-way (a curvature radius of 300 meters limits speed to 60 kilometers per hour; straightened out to 600 meters, it will raise the speed limit to 120 kilometers per hour).

The entire available labor force was put on this work. Work on other lines stopped. Sixty thousand men were employed and are now continuing the work between Margecany and Chop.

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The decision of the congress to complete the project in 1949 was obviously reached without consulting any technical experts. A completion within the prescribed period was impossible from the start no matter how many workers were available.

The laborers are required to work 8 hours a day, but in order to go home each week end they put in 12 hours of work daily, then leave Friday night until Monday morning. Saturday and Sunday the work goes on and is carried out by youth groups and staff members. Although they constitute a poor labor force, they are of a certain value because of their large number and because they are not paid for their work. The laborers are well paid (5,000-10,000 crowns monthly. It should be noted that one construction site is reserved for students, who must participate in the work during a "voluntary period of one month." This site is located between Slovenske Nové mesto and Kral'ovský Chlmec.

The laborers do not always have modern technical means on hand, even though Czechoslovakia manufactures many machines and delivers them daily to the USSR.

The new tracks are laid by sections in order to interrupt traffic coming from Chop for only a short period of time (maximum 2 hours).

Rushing of the project has already caused certain miscalculations such as earth slides.

Wooden ties are used. The rails come from Moravska Ostrava.

The Zilina-Margecany section will be completed in the beginning of 1953 (based on an estimated 400 workdays since the end of April 1951).

There are two tunnels between Zilina and Vrutky (near Strecno), a third at Kral'ovany, a fourth and a fifth between Kysak and Kosice (one of them measures at least 2 kilometers). The third tunnel is a new construction, the others are reconstructed.

Other Railroad Lines

Margecany-Zvolen: single track

Zvolen-Bratislava: double-track

Banska Bystrica-UL'anka-Harmanec-Diviaky: This important line was constructed in 1938. It has 22 tunnels, one of which is more than 5 kilometers long.

Banska Stiavnica-Hronska Breznica: This line has been converted from narrow to standard gauge. The 18-kilometer-long line required much construction work, such as the modernization of two tunnels, one of which is located directly at the exit from Banska Stiavnica and the other before Banska Bela.

The work has been performed within the program of re-education of the youth. The amount approved was 195 million crowns. The expenses exceeded one billion crowns.

The line ensures the transportation of coal and manganese ore from the Banska Stiavnica mines.

Tracop-Ipolytarnoc line, toward Kalonda line: This line, which crosses 12 kilometers of Hungarian territory, will be opened to traffic on 15 May 1951.

Kosice-Plesivec line (toward Lucenec-Zvolen-Zilina): It is planned to modernize the existing lines and to construct a line from Roznava to Turna. The latter line will necessitate digging two tunnels. Work will begin in May 1951 and will require at least a year and a half.

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Ruzomberok-Harmanec: A project was laid out in 1943. This line will have 24 tunnels over a stretch of 51 kilometers. No work has been done.

Kral'ovany-Povy Targ (Poland): The modernization of this old line has been under consideration.

Railroad Bridges and Shipments Through Chop

The most important railroad bridges in Slovakia are located at Strecno (150 meters long), Vrutky (40 meters), Turany (150 meters), Kral'ovany 80 meters), Parizovce (60 meters), and east of Liptovsky Svaty Mikulas (42 meters). There are numerous shorter bridges across small rivers.

For the last 2 years, a train of 15-20 cars loaded with cases of machinery has passed daily through Chop into the USSR. This train also includes daily one additional locomotive, one car with steel pipes (30-35 centimeters), and two excavators.

The only important military traffic observed in Chop was the east-west passage of about 500 tanks in the winter of 1949 - 1950.

AVIATION

No aerial activity or airfield construction was observed in Slovakia. There is an aviation school at Liptovsky Svaty Mikulas and another at Piestany. The latter has no concrete runway.

INDUSTRY

Industrial enterprises have been observed at the following places:

Povazska Bystrica: large armaments plants which were developed during World War II by the Germans.

At Viglas, east of Zvolen, a large subterranean armaments plant is under construction.

Tisovec: blast furnace, small installation

Brezno: large bridge building plant

Moravska Ostrava: large bridge building plant which has been expanded to one of the largest of Central Europe.

Vrutky: locomotive repair center

Batizovce: enormous textile plant, reaching proportions of a small city.

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POWER

Along the Vah River, between Povazska Bystrica and Piestany, power plants have been under construction for the last 10 years.

The "Youth Dam" is located at Povazska Bystrica.

There are other dams, particularly near Lednicke Rovne, Trencin, and Cachtice.

Work on the hydroelectric power plant at Sutovo has been going on for 2 years and will last another 5 years.

A large dam has been under construction near Trstena for the last 10 years (poor foundations). It is planned to develop armaments plants here.

A dam is under construction between Kosice and Kysak.

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